Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

1400 South 19th Avenue
Bozeman, MT 59718

March 22, 2017

Dear Interested Party,

Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks is requesting public input on a proposed project to protect native westslope cutthroat trout (WCT) in English George Creek, a tributary to the upper Madison River (see attached map). English George Creek currently supports a slightly hybridized population of native westslope cutthroat trout.

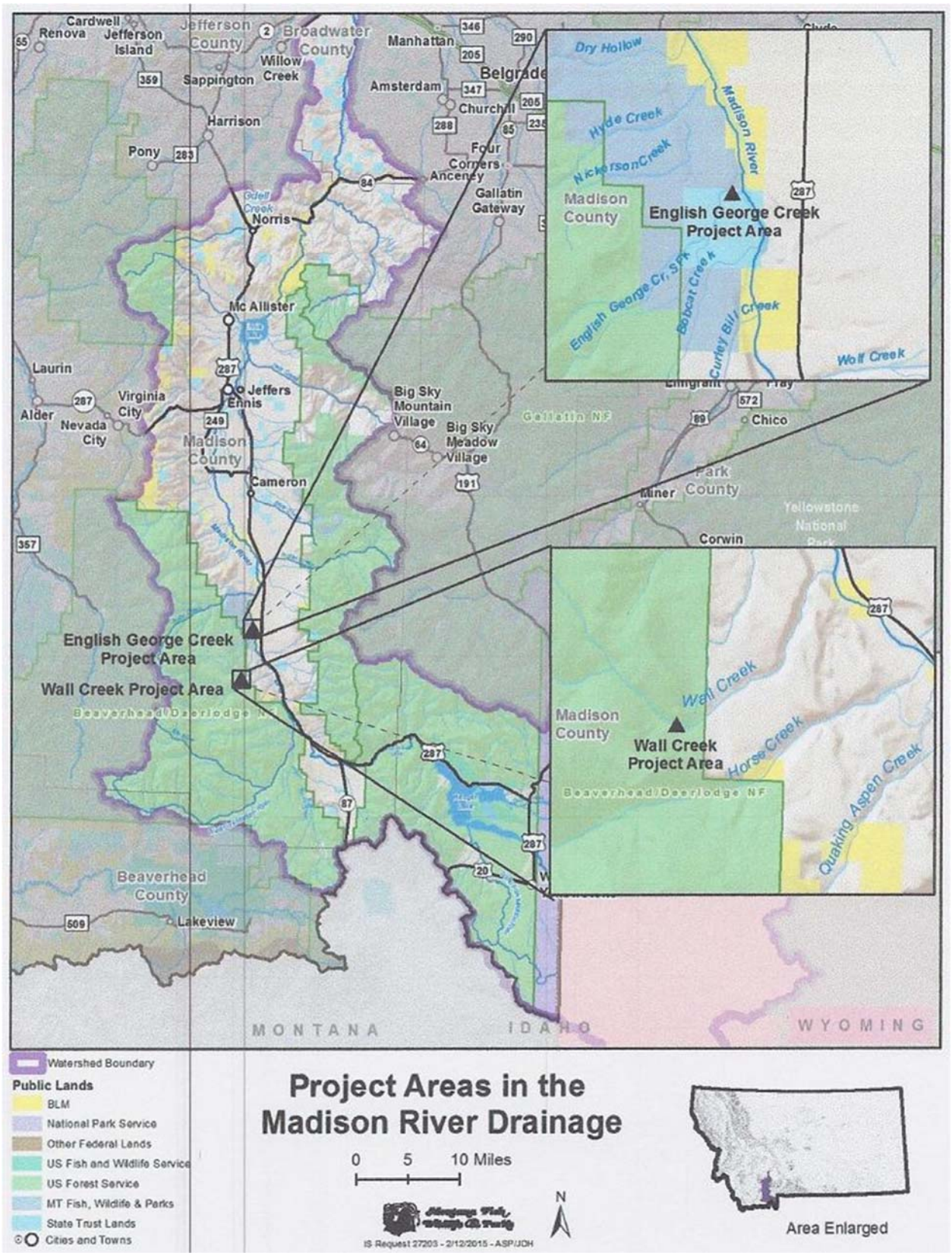
Westslope cutthroat trout (WCT) are the only trout native to the Madison River. Non-hybridized WCT occupy less than 4% of their historical habitat within the Missouri River system and less than 1% in the Madison River drainage. Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks seeks to protect and secure both pure populations as well as slightly hybridized populations of WCT. The only feasible means of protecting these populations is removal of threats from downstream non-native species upstream of migration barriers. English George Creek supports a slightly hybridized population of WCT (93% pure) due to the existence of a partial fish barrier located within Wall Creek Game Range. The proposed project would enhance the current partial barrier to more reliably prevent additional hybridization with rainbow trout.

Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks is requesting public input and comments on this proposal to construct a fish barrier to protect westslope cutthroat trout. Comments are requested until April 22, 2017. If you have any written comments regarding the proposed project, please mail them to Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks, c/o English George Creek Fish Barrier, 1400 S. 19th Ave., Bozeman, MT 59718 or e-mail them to Dave Moser (davemoser@mt.gov). If you have any questions regarding the proposed project, please contact Dave Moser (FWP, Area Fisheries Biologist) at (406) 994-6938.

Thanks for your time and consideration of this proposed native fish protection project.

Sincerely,

Sam B. Sheppard
Region 3 Supervisor
Attachment


Cardwell
Renova
Jefferson Island
Jefferson County
Broadwater County
Willow Creek
Sappington
Manhattan
Belgrade
Amsterdam
Churchill
Harrison
Pony
Four Corners
Ancenay
Gallatin Gateway
Norris
Mc Allister
Laurin
Alder
Virginia City
Nevada City
Jeffers
Ennis
Madison County
Big Sky Mountain Village
Big Sky Meadow Village
Gallatin NF
Cameron
Chico
Park County
Miner
Yellowstone National Park
Corwin
English George Creek Project Area
Wall Creek Project Area
Beaverhead/Deerlodge NF
Beaverhead County
Lakeview
MONTANA
IDAHO
WYOMING
Dry Hollow
Hyde Creek
Nickerson Creek
Madison River
English George Cr. SPK
Bobcat Creek
Curley Bill Creek
Wolf Creek
Wall Creek
Horse Creek
Quaking Aspen Creek
Watershed Boundary
Public Lands
BLM
National Park Service
Other Federal Lands
US Fish and Wildlife Service
US Forest Service
MT Fish, Wildlife & Parks
State Trust Lands
Cities and Towns
Project Areas in the Madison River Drainage
0 5 10 Miles
N
IS Request 27203 - 2/12/2015 - ASP/JDH
Area Enlarged

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

English George Fish Barrier Environmental Assessment

March 2017

Fish Barrier Construction on English George Creek
Draft Environmental Assessment
MEPA/NEPA CHECKLIST

PART I. PROPOSED ACTION DESCRIPTION

1. Type of Proposed State Action:

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) proposes to construct a barrier to upstream fish migration on English George Creek to protect a population of 93% genetically pure westslope cutthroat trout (WCT) from further introgression with non-native rainbow trout from the Madison River (Fig. 1).

2. Agency Authority for the Proposed Action:
MCA 87-1-201. Powers and Duties.

FWP is required by law (§87-1-201(9)(a) Montana Code Annotated [MCA]) to implement programs that manage sensitive fish species in a manner that assists in the maintenance or recovery of those species, and that prevents the need to list the species under § 87-5-107 MCA or the federal Endangered Species Act. Section 87-1-201(9)(a), M.C.A.

FWP is a signatory to the Memorandum of Understanding and Conservation Agreement for Westslope Cutthroat Trout in Montana (FWP 1999, 2007) which states: "The management goal for WCT in Montana is to ensure the long-term, self-sustaining persistence of the subspecies within each of the five major river drainages they historically inhabited in Montana, and to maintain genetic diversity and life history strategies represented by the remaining local populations."

According the FWP Statewide Fisheries Management Plan, the restoration goal for WCT east of the Continental Divide (Upper Missouri River Basin upstream from and including the Judith River) is to restore secure conservation populations of WCT to 20% of their historic distribution (FWP 2012). Populations of WCT are considered secure by FWP when they are isolated from non-native fishes, typically by a physical fish passage barrier, have a population size of at least 2,500 fish, and occupy sufficient (5 to 6 miles) habitat to assure long-term persistence. Currently WCT (including slightly hybridized populations > 90% WCT) occupy approximately 8% of their historic habitat range-wide.

3. Anticipated Schedule:
Estimated Commencement Date: July 2017
Estimated Completion Date: July 2017

4. Location Affected by Proposed Action:
The proposed action would be conducted in Madison County approximately 20 miles south of the town of Ennis, MT; T9S R1W Latitude 45. 00'07.2576"N Longitude 111.40'46.7400"W; on English George Creek located on the Wall Creek Game Range which is owned and managed by Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks (Fig. 1.)

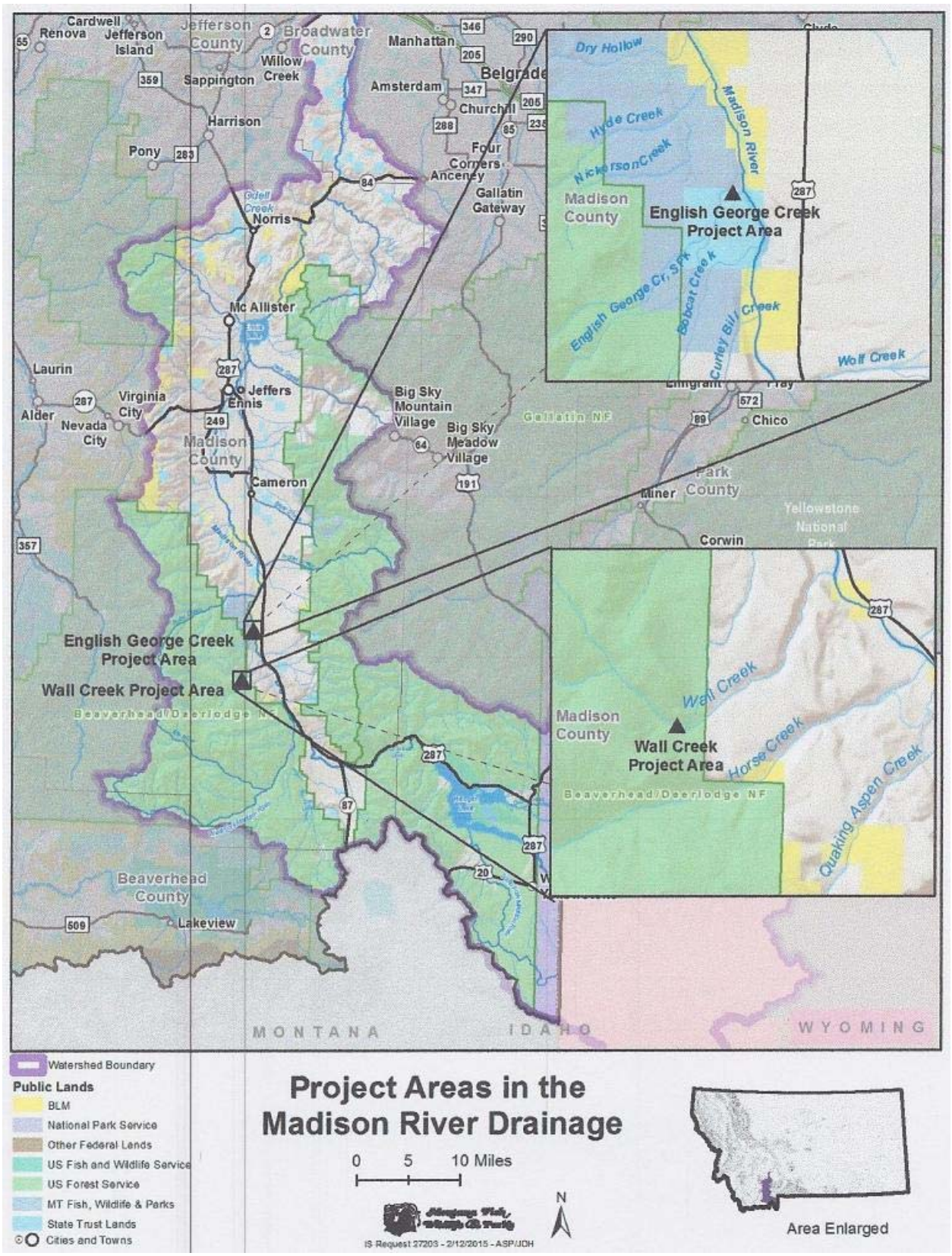


Figure 1. The Madison River Drainage showing the proposed English George Fish Barrier Site.

6. Project Size (acres affected)

1. Developed/residential – 0 acres
2. Industrial – 0 acres
3. Open space/Woodlands/Recreation – 0 acres
4. Wetlands/Riparian – The affected area would be approximately 100' of English George Creek stream bank
5. Floodplain – 0 acres
6. Irrigated Cropland – 0 acres
7. Dry Cropland – 0 acres
8. Forestry – 0 acres
9. Rangeland – 0 acres

7. Listing of any other Local, State or Federal agency that has overlapping or additional jurisdiction:

(a) Permits:

- SPA 124 Permit - Montana Stream Protection Act, (Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks)
- 318 Authorization - Short-Term Water Quality Standard for Turbidity, (Dept. of Environmental Quality
- 404 Permit - Federal Clean Water Act. (Army Corps of Engineers)

(b) Funding:

Agency Name: Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
Funding Amount $10,000 from awarded grants

(c) Other Overlapping or Additional Jurisdictional Responsibilities:

Agency Name: United States Fish and Wildlife Service
Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks, Wildlife Division
Type of Responsibility: If listed under ESA.

8. Narrative summary of the proposed action:

Westslope cutthroat trout (*Oncorhynchus clarkii lewisi*), Montana's state fish, has declined in abundance, distribution, and genetic diversity throughout its native range (Shepard et al. 2003). Reduced distribution of WCT is particularly evident in the Missouri River drainage of Montana where genetically pure populations are estimated to persist in less than 5% of habitat they historically occupied. Major factors contributing to this decline include habitat changes, isolation to small head water streams, competition with nonnative brook trout (*Salvelinus fontinalis*), brown trout (*Salmo trutta*), and rainbow trout (*O. mykiss*), and hybridization with rainbow trout and Yellowstone cutthroat trout (*O. c. bouvieri*). Due to these threats, most remaining WCT populations in the Missouri River drainage are considered to have a low likelihood of long-term (100 years) persistence unless conservation actions are implemented (Shepard et al. 1997).

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks' management of Westslope Cutthroat Trout designates 'core populations' those populations that exhibit 100% genetic purity, and conservation populations those that exhibit 90-99.9% genetic purity as target population for conservation. While conservation populations are not 100%

genetically pure, they warrant protection because they still maintain important genetic diversity, local adaptation, life history forms, and phenotypic variations of the species. However, these traits are lost through further hybridization with non-native trout species.

The construction of a barrier to upstream migration of Rainbow Trout in English George Creek is needed to protect the English George WCT population from further hybridization. The proposed barrier would be a wooden structure to create a 4-foot vertical drop in the stream channel that would be impassable to upstream fish migration (Fig. 2).

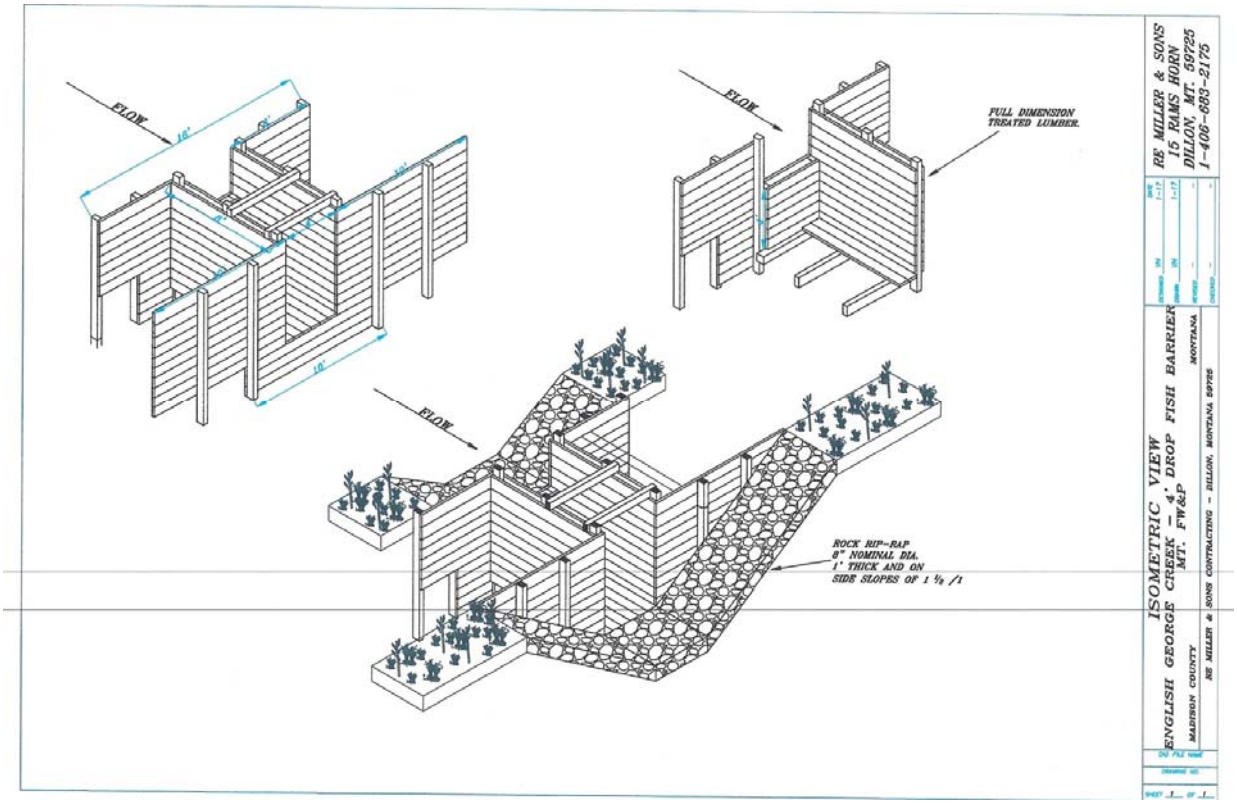


Figure 2. Schematic of proposed fish barrier on English George Creek

9. Alternatives:

Alternative A: No Action

If no action is taken, the English George WCT population genetic purity will continue to decline and with it life history forms, local adaptations, and phenotypic variations that are unique to the current population.

Additionally, FWP is mandated to implement conservation actions that assist in the maintenance or recovery of sensitive species to prevent the need for listing under the Endangered Species Act (MCA 87-1-201). A No Action alternative to this project would not be consistent with these statutory requirements.

Alternative B: Proposed Action

The proposed action is to eliminate upstream migration of non-native rainbow trout and further hybridization with the English George WCT population through the construction of a fish-passage barrier. The proposed project would result in protecting approximately three miles of habitat occupied by 93% genetically pure WCT population. English George Creek below the fish barrier would be unaltered and continue to be maintained as a spawning site for Madison River fish.

Benefits of the Proposed Project

The primary purpose of this project is to help achieve the goal of ensuring the long-term, self-sustaining presence of WCT in the upper Missouri River Drainage by securing a relatively unaltered genetic WCT populations in the Madison River drainage. These projects seek to achieve the management goal for cutthroat in Montana as well as long-term self-sustaining persistence and protection of the genetic legacy of these important fish across the species historic range.

PART II. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

A. PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

1. LAND RESOURCES Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT *				Can Impact Be Mitigated*	Comment Index
	Unknown *	None	Minor *	Potentially Significant		
a. **Soil instability or changes in geologic substructure?			X			1a
b. Disruption, displacement, erosion, compaction, moisture loss, or over-covering of soil which would reduce productivity or fertility?			X			1b
c. **Destruction, covering or modification of any unique geologic or physical features?		X				
d. Changes in siltation, deposition or erosion patterns that may modify the channel of a river or stream or the bed or shore of a lake?			X			1d
e. Exposure of people or property to earthquakes, landslides, ground failure, or other natural hazard?		X				
f. Other:		X				

Comment 1a, 1b, 1d:

Construction activities would be localized around the immediate barrier construction area. Heavy equipment necessary for construction would be staged near the construction area and would be limited to the smallest amount of land necessary for project completion. All permits necessary to work in and around English George Creek would be obtained including: Montana Stream Protection Act (SPA 124), Short-Term Water Quality Standard for Turbidity (318 Authorization), and Federal Clean Water Act (404) permits. Construction Best Management Practices (BMPs) to reduce erosion and sedimentation would be used and would include but may not be limited to the following measures:

- Temporary diversions for storm runoff flows from English George Creek would be constructed as specified and as needed to direct flows around the work area. Diversions would be designed, implemented, and maintained by the contractor in accordance with BMPs to control erosion and sediment release into English George Creek. BMPs may include, but are not limited to, temporary berms, cofferdams, sediment basins, ditches, silt fencing, straw bales, straw mulch, and erosion control matting.

- The contractor would plan and execute work to control and minimize surface runoff from cuts, fills, and other disturbed areas. The contractor would prevent sediment and/or sediment laden water from entering English George Creek to the extent practicable.

- All dewatering flows collected from open sumps, trenches, or excavations would be routed through sediment retention structures prior to discharge to English George Creek.

- BMP measures would be installed along the margin of English George Creek prior to any earthwork which could release sediment to English George Creek. The BMPs would remain until vegetation is established. Disturbed areas would be mulched and seeded with a native plant mixture

Cumulative Impacts:

Impacts from construction of a fish barrier would be limited to the construction period and a short recovery period afterward. Construction would occur during baseflow. The barrier would trap some fine sediment and bedload after construction; once the barrier naturally backfills (one to two years), sediment and bedload would pass downstream naturally. FWP does not expect the barrier to require maintenance or for the barrier to create other/future unforeseen impacts to land resources. Contractors would be required to restore any roads or infrastructure to a pre-project state. No long-term cumulative impacts are expected from implementation of the English George Creek project.

2. AIR **Will the proposed action result in:**	**IMPACT ***				**Can Impact Be Mitigated***	**Comment Index**
	Unknown *	**None**	**Minor ***	**Potentially Significant**		
a. **Emission of air pollutants or deterioration of ambient air quality?			X			2a
b. Creation of objectionable odors?		X				
c. Alteration of air movement, moisture, or temperature patterns or any change in climate, either locally or regionally?		X				
d. Adverse effects on vegetation, including crops, due to increased emissions of pollutants?		X				
e. ***For P-R/D-J projects, will the project result in any discharge, which will conflict with federal or state air quality regs?		X				
f. Other:						

Comment 2a:

During construction of the barrier, the use of heavy equipment and generators would impact air quality near the construction project. These impacts would be limited to the periods of construction and the immediate construction area.

Cumulative Impacts:

Impacts to air quality from barrier construction would be short term and minor. FWP does not expect the proposed action to result in other actions that would create cumulative impacts to air quality near English George Creek, nor does FWP foresee any other activities in the basin that would add to impacts of the proposed action.

3. WATER Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT *				Can Impact Be Mitigated*	Comment Index
	Unknown *	None	Minor *	Potentially Significant		
a. *Discharge into surface water or any alteration of surface water quality including but not limited to temperature, dissolved oxygen or turbidity?			X		X	2a
b. Changes in drainage patterns or the rate and amount of surface runoff?		X				
c. Alteration of the course or magnitude of floodwater or other flows?		X				2c
d. Changes in the amount of surface water in any water body or creation of a new water body?		X				
e. Exposure of people or property to water related hazards such as flooding?		X				
f. Changes in the quality of groundwater?		X				
g. Changes in the quantity of groundwater?		X				
h. Increase in risk of contamination of surface or groundwater?		X				
i. Effects on any existing water right or reservation?		X				2i
j. Effects on other water users as a result of any alteration in surface or groundwater quality?		X				
k. Effects on other users as a result of any alteration in surface or groundwater quantity?		X				
l. ****For P-R/D-J, will the project affect a designated floodplain?		X				
m. ***For P-R/D-J, will the project result in any discharge that will affect federal or state water quality regulations?		X				
n. Other:		X				

Comment 2a, 2c, 2i:

A barrier to upstream movement of non-native fishes would be constructed. The gradient of the stream at the proposed barrier location is high enough to prevent an impoundment of water. Loss of water to evaporation because of the barrier would be negligible and would not affect downstream water users. The barrier is designed to provide passage of flood flows estimated to have a recurrence interval of 100 years.

Cumulative Impacts:

No Impacts

4. VEGETATION Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT *				Can Impact Be Mitigated*	Comment Index
	Unknown *	None	Minor *	Potentially Significant		
a. Changes in the diversity, productivity or abundance of plant species (including trees, shrubs, grass, crops, and aquatic plants)?		X				
b. Alteration of a plant community?			X		Yes	4b
c. Adverse effects on any unique, rare, threatened, or endangered species?		X				
d. Reduction in acreage or productivity of any agricultural land?		X				
e. Establishment or spread of noxious weeds?		X	X		Yes	4e
f. ****For P-R/D-J, will the project affect wetlands, or prime and unique farmland?		X				
g. Other:		X				

Comment 4b:

During barrier construction, there would be a localized impact to vegetation at the proposed barrier site. Heavy equipment necessary for construction would access the proposed barrier site along Wall Creek Access Road. Post construction, areas disturbed would be scarified and re-seeded with an appropriate native seed mix. (Fig. 1).

Comment 4e:

Temporary and localized disturbance to the ground during construction may create an environment conducive to noxious weed recruitment and growth. In addition, machinery and equipment used during the project may inadvertently carry noxious weeds to the project site. Proposed mitigation includes: 1) Washing all equipment and vehicles before accessing staging areas; removal of mud, dirt, and plant parts from project equipment before moving into project area; 2) inspection of the project area for noxious weeds annually for three years after the project is completed. If noxious weeds are found in the project area after project completion, herbicidal, manual, or biological removal of weeds, including bagging and appropriate disposal, would be implemented. Inspections and weed removal would continue in perpetuity during regular site visits by project fishery workers.

Cumulative Impacts:

Impacts to vegetation due to barrier construction would be short term and minor. FWP does not expect the proposed action to result in other actions that would create cumulative impacts to vegetation near English George Creek. Requirements for road maintenance would be similar for both projects. Contractors would be required to follow BMP's for weed prevention and weed removal for both projects; thus, no long-term cumulative impacts are expected from implementation of both these projects.

** 5. FISH/WILDLIFE Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT *				Can Impact Be Mitigated *	Comment Index
	Unknown *	None	Minor *	Potentially Significant		
a. Deterioration of critical fish or wildlife habitat?		X				
b. Changes in the diversity or abundance of game animals or bird species?			X			5b
c. Changes in the diversity or abundance of nongame species?			X			5c
d. Introduction of new species into an area?		X				
e. Creation of a barrier to the migration or movement of animals?		X				
f. Adverse effects on any unique, rare, threatened, or endangered species?		X				
g. Increase in conditions that stress wildlife populations or limit abundance (including harassment, legal or illegal harvest or other human activity)?		X				5g
h. ****For P-R/D-J, will the project be performed in any area in which T&E species are present, and will the project affect any T&E species or their habitat?		X				
i. ***For P-R/D-J, will the project introduce or export any species not presently or historically occurring in the receiving location?		X				
j. Other:		X				

Comment 5b:

This project will prevent further hybridization from occurring in English George Creek thus protecting potentially rare and localized adaptations of WCT to habitat in English George Creek.

Comment 5c:

Impacts to the stream channel and the benthic community from barrier construction would be localized, minor, and temporary.

Comment 5g: The fish barrier would likely take between one to two weeks to complete. During construction, noise levels at the immediate barrier area would be elevated and may temporarily dislocate or stress some individual wildlife in the immediate area. In addition, there would be some transfer of equipment, materials, and personnel to the barrier construction site. All construction activities would occur during baseflow (mid to late summer) after most breeding and nesting seasons.

Cumulative Impacts:

Impacts to fish and wildlife from barrier construction would be short term and minor. FWP does not expect the proposed action to result in other actions that would create cumulative impacts to fish and wildlife resources in

in the area. As such there are no cumulative impacts to non-target organisms related to construction of the barrier on English George Creek.

B. HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

6. NOISE/ELECTRICAL EFFECTS **Will the proposed action result in:**	**IMPACT ∗**				**Can Impact Be Mitigated ∗**	**Comment Index**
	Unknown ∗	**None**	**Minor ∗**	**Potentially Significant**		
a. Increases in existing noise levels?		X				6a
b. Exposure of people to serve or nuisance noise levels?		X				
c. Creation of electrostatic or electromagnetic effects that could be detrimental to human health or property?		X				
d. Interference with radio or television reception and operation?		X				
e. Other:		X				

Comment 6a:

The barrier project site would be less than 100 meters from the road that crosses English George Creek. During construction (one to two weeks), there would be heavy equipment operating in the immediate area near the proposed barrier. There would also be some movement of equipment, materials, and supplies on the road crossing English George Creek.

Cumulative Impacts:

Increases in noise from barrier construction would be short term and minor. FWP does not expect the proposed action to result in other actions that would create increased noise in the English George stream corridor. There are no predicted long-term cumulative impacts from completion of both projects.

7. LAND USE **Will the proposed action result in:**	**IMPACT ∗**				**Can Impact Be Mitigated ∗**	**Comment Index**
	Unknown ∗	**None**	**Minor ∗**	**Potentially Significant**		
a. Alteration of or interference with the productivity or profitability of the existing land use of an area?		X				
b. Conflicted with a designated natural area or area of unusual scientific or educational importance?		X				
c. Conflict with any existing land use whose presence would constrain or potentially prohibit the proposed action?		X				
d. Adverse effects on or relocation of residences?		X				
e. Other:		X				

No Impacts. The project will have no impact on land use.

8. RISK/HEALTH HAZARDS Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT *				Can Impact Be Mitigated *	Comment Index
	Unknown *	None	Minor *	Potentially Significant		
a. Risk of an explosion or release of hazardous substances (including, but not limited to oil, pesticides, chemicals, or radiation) in the event of an accident or other forms of disruption?		X				
b. Affect an existing emergency response or emergency evacuation plan or create a need for a new plan?		X				
c. Creation of any human health hazard or potential hazard?		X				
d. ***For P-R/D-J, will any chemical toxicants be used?		X				
e. Other:		X				

No Impacts. The proposed project will not create any risk or health hazards.

9. COMMUNITY IMPACT Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT *				Can Impact Be Mitigated *	Comment Index
	Unknown *	None	Minor *	Potentially Significant		
a. Alteration of the location, distribution, density, or growth rate of the human population of an area?		X				
b. Alteration of the social structure of a community?		X				
c. Alteration of the level or distribution of employment or community or personal income?		X				
d. Changes in industrial or commercial activity?		X				
e. Increased traffic hazards or effects on existing transportation facilities or patterns of movement of people and goods?		X				
f. Other:		X				

No Impacts. The proposed project will have no community impact.

10. PUBLIC SERVICES/TAXES/UTILITIES **Will the proposed action result in:**	**IMPACT ∗**				**Can Impact Be Mitigated ∗**	**Comment Index**
	Unknown ∗	**None**	**Minor ∗**	**Potentially Significant**		
a. Will the proposed action have an effect upon or result in a need for new or altered governmental services in any of the following areas: fire or police protection, schools, parks/recreational facilities, roads or other public maintenance, water supply, sewer or septic systems, solid waste disposal, health, or other governmental services? If any, specify:		X				
b. Will the proposed action have an effect upon the local or state tax base and revenues?		X				
c. Will the proposed action result in a need for new facilities or substantial alterations of any of the following utilities: electric power, natural gas, other fuel supply or distribution systems, or communications?		X				
d. Will the proposed action result in increased used of any energy source?		X				
e. ∗∗Define projected revenue sources		X				
f. ∗∗Define projected maintenance costs.		X				
g. Other:		X				

No Impact. The proposed project will have no effect on public services, taxes or utilities.

∗∗ 11. AESTHETICS/RECREATION **Will the proposed action result in:**	**IMPACT ∗**				**Can Impact Be Mitigated ∗**	**Comment Index**
	Unknown ∗	**None**	**Minor ∗**	**Potentially Significant**		
a. Alteration of any scenic vista or creation of an aesthetically offensive site or effect that is open to public view?			X			11a
b. Alteration of the aesthetic character of a community or neighborhood?		X				
c. ∗∗Alteration of the quality or quantity of recreational/tourism opportunities and settings? (Attach Tourism Report)		X				
d. ∗∗∗For P-R/D-J, will any designated or proposed wild or scenic rivers, trails or wilderness areas be impacted?		X				
e. Other:		X				

Comment 11a:

The proposed fish barrier will be viewable from the Wall Creek Game Range access road. The total footprint of the fish barrier will be minimized and constructed to meet requirements for blocking passage of Rainbow Trout from the Madison River.

12. CULTURAL/HISTORICAL RESOURCES Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT *				Can Impact Be Mitigated *	Comment Index
	Unknown *	None	Minor *	Potentially Significant		
a. **Destruction or alteration of any site, structure or object of prehistoric historic or paleontological importance?		X				12a
b. Physical change that would affect unique cultural values?		X				
c. Effects on existing religious or sacred uses of a site or area?		X				
d. ****For P-R/D-J, will the project affect historic or cultural resources? Attach SHPO letter of clearance.		X				
e. Other:		X				

Comment 12a:

Prior to any ground disturbance or construction activities, an archaeological survey will be completed and State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) clearance will be obtained.

C. SIGNIFICANCE CRITERIA

13. SUMMARY EVALUATION OF SIGNIFICANCE **Will the proposed action, considered as a whole:**	**IMPACT ***				**Can Impact Be Mitigated ***	**Comment Index**
	Unknown *	**None**	**Minor ***	**Potentially Significant**		
a. Have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? (A project or program may result in impacts on two or more separate resources that create a significant effect when considered together or in total.)		X				
b. Involve potential risks or adverse effects which are uncertain but extremely hazardous if they were to occur?		X				
c. Potentially conflict with the substantive requirements of any local, state, or federal law, regulation, standard or formal plan?		X				
d. Establish a precedent or likelihood that future actions with significant environmental impacts will be proposed?		X				13d
e. Generate substantial debate or controversy about the nature of the impacts that would be created?		X				
f. ***For P-R/D-J, is the project expected to have organized opposition or generate substantial public controversy?		X				
g. ****For P-R/D-J, list any federal or state permits required.		X				13g

Comment 13d:

This project does not establish a precedent or likelihood that additional projects with significant environmental impacts would be proposed.

Comment 13g:

The following permits would be required prior to construction of the proposed fish barrier:

SPA 124 Permit - Montana Stream Protection Act (Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks)
318 Authorization - Short-Term Water Quality Standard for Turbidity (MT Dept. of Environmental Quality)
404 Permit - Federal Clean Water Act. (Corps of Engineers)

All References Available on Request

PART II. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW, CONTINUED

2. **Evaluation and listing of mitigation, stipulation, or other control measures enforceable by the agency or another government agency:**

   The proposed project is located on Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks lands. Prior to construction, a 124 permit would be obtained from a Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks agent unrelated and neutral to the proposed project.

PART III. NARRATIVE EVALUATION AND COMMENT

Alternative A: No Action

If no action is taken, the English George WCT population will be under constant and unending threat from non-native fishes. Genetic purity will continue to decline and with it life history forms, local adaptations, and phenotypic variations that are unique to the current population. At some point, the only native trout to the Missouri River drainage will be extinct.

Additionally, FWP is mandated to implement conservation actions that assist in the maintenance or recovery of sensitive species to prevent the need to for listing under the Endangered Species Act (MCA 87-1-201). A No Action alternative to this project would not be consistent with these management requirements.

Alternative B: Proposed Action

The proposed action is to eliminate upstream migration of non-native rainbow trout and further hybridization with the English George Creek WCT population through the construction of a barrier. The proposed project would result in protecting approximately three miles of habitat occupied by 93% genetically pure WCT population. English George Creek below the fish barrier would be unaltered and continue to be maintained as a spawning site for Madison River fish.

PART IV. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

1. Public Involvement:

Public will be notified through publication in the Madisonian and the Bozeman Chronicle and through contact with the local watershed and sports groups. This EA will also be published on the Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks web page (http://fwp.mt.gov/default.html). This level of public involvement is believed adequate for the proposed project.

2. Duration of comment period:

The public comment period for this proposed action is from March 22 to April 22, 2017. Written comments can be mailed to:

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
c/o English George Creek Fish Barrier
1400 South 19th Avenue
Bozeman, MT 59718

Or via email to: davemoser@mt.gov

PART V. EA PREPARATION

1. **Based on the significance criteria evaluated in the EA, is an EIS required?** (YES/NO)?
   No

2. **If an EIS is not required, explain why the EA is the appropriate level of analysis for this proposed action.**

3. After considering the potential impacts of the proposed action and possible mitigation measures, Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks has determined that an Environmental Impact Statement is not warranted. The impacts of construction of a fish barrier as described in this document are minor and/or temporary, and mitigation for many of the impacts is possible.

4. **Name, title, address and phone number of the person(s) responsible for preparing the EA:**

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4. **List of agencies consulted during the preparation of the EA**:

   Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks—Fisheries Wildlife & Parks